

## **WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS**

*Week ending March 14, 2008*

State law assigns four core duties to the State Planning Office that include: 1) conducting continuing economic analysis, including economic forecasting, 2) coordinating the development of the State's economy and energy resources with the conservation of its natural resources; 3) providing technical assistance to towns and regions; and 4) providing technical assistance to the Governor and Legislature by undertaking special studies and plans and preparing policy alternatives.

### **DIRECTOR'S POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM**

**Staff changes at SPO.** There are two staff changes pending at SPO. TJ Tavares will leave on March 14 to run for the legislature. TJ worked primarily on legislative issues related to taxation and education. He also helped coordinate the state's response to three possible LNG proposals and assisted local communities Downeast involved in the process. While he was here, TJ wrote SPO's report for the Legislature's State and Local Government Committee in accordance with the Government Evaluation Act. We wish TJ every success.

Jon Kachmar has accepted a position with The Nature Conservancy in Connecticut where he will work on a new Long Island Sound initiative. Jon has been a great asset to the Coastal Program and our Gulf of Maine partners through his work on region-wide habitat restoration and we'll miss him a great deal. John will be leaving in mid-April. We congratulate him on this new opportunity. **CONTACT: Tony VanDenBossche at 287-1474 or [tony.vandenbossche@maine.gov](mailto:tony.vandenbossche@maine.gov)**

### **COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

**Belgrade Central School holds assembly to salute recycling efforts.** Bruce White met with a team of teachers, administrators, staff, and others about recycling at the school



before addressing the 296 students to thank them for their efforts. The Maine Recycles Week Steering Committee selected the school as one of their favorites for the 2007 campaign. Led by the environmental club – Green Fusion, the award has reignited interest in the school in recycling with hope for greater success at home. Bruce White presented the school with a Maine

Recycles check for its outstanding work (see accompanying photo). **Contact: Bruce White at 287-8053 or [bruce.white@maine.gov](mailto:bruce.white@maine.gov).**

### **LAND FOR MAINE'S FUTURE PROGRAM**

**Working waterfront project completed.** The Land for Maine's Future Program closed on the second working waterfront access protection project this week with the purchase of a working waterfront covenant from the Port Clyde Fishermen's Co-op. The co-op operates on a 0.79-acre, waterfront property in Port Clyde, which provides working access for 28 co-op members. In addition, the commercial fishing property supports a bait dealer and a seafood processing company. With the proceeds from the sale of the covenant the co-op is building a new pier that will meet the future needs of co-op members as well as serve the access needs of local ground fishermen. **CONTACT: Jim Connors at [jim.connors@maine.gov](mailto:jim.connors@maine.gov)**

### **LAND USE PLANNING**

**Service center rule resolve printed.** SPO's amendments to Chapter 220, the methodology to identify regional service centers, have been released by the Revisor's Office as LD 2250 and referred to the Legislature's Business Research and Economic Development Committee. Because it is classified by statute as a major-substantive rule, SPO has only provisionally adopted the amendments. The Legislature must authorize the implementation of the amendments before the Office adopts the final rule changes. For more information: <http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/techassist/servicecenterlist.htm>. **CONTACT: Stacy Benjamin at 287-8061 or [stacy.benjamin@maine.gov](mailto:stacy.benjamin@maine.gov)**

### **GOVERNOR'S OFFICE OF ENERGY INDEPENDENCE AND SECURITY**

**Heating fuel prices rise again.** The Office of Energy Independence and Security's March 10, 2008 survey of home heating oil prices found the current statewide average cash price for No. 2 heating oil to be up by \$.16 since the last week at \$3.61 per gallon and

\$1.22 higher than last year at this time. The statewide kerosene price average is up by \$0.14 since last week at \$4.00 per gallon and \$1.21 higher than last year at this time. The propane price survey found the statewide average to be \$3.00 per gallon which is \$0.05 less than last week and \$0.55 higher than last year at this time.

For the second week in a row and the fourth straight day the price of WTI crude oil broke an inflation adjusted record on Monday trading at 107.56 per barrel. The market dynamics that contribute the run up in oil prices continue to worsen. In addition, last week's EIA petroleum report indicated a 3.1 million barrel decrease in the nation's oil inventories at a time of the year when inventories should be gaining.

The Office conducts a weekly survey of home heating oil, kerosene, and propane prices from November through March. For more information:

<http://www.maineenergyinfo.com/oil/index.html>. **CONTACT: Ian Burnes at 287-8927 or [ian.burnes@maine.gov](mailto:ian.burnes@maine.gov)**

**Governor to open energy summit.** In an effort to help businesses in Maine deal with rapidly escalating energy costs, Governor John E. Baldacci will open the first Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit & Expo on April 3 at the Augusta Civic Center. This summit will help businesses better understand the opportunities that exist to implement strategies that will give their companies an energy advantage.

The keynote speaker, Thomas R. Casten, has spent 30 years developing highly efficient decentralized energy recycling projects. He recently co-authored a chapter in *Energy Myth and American Society, Thirteen Myths* (Sovacool & Brown), challenging the assumption that the U.S. electric system is optimal.

Registration for this all day event is \$25 and includes lunch and conference materials. Pre-registration is required. To register, go to [www.maine.gov/governor](http://www.maine.gov/governor) and click on The Governor's Energy Efficiency Summit.